



LEXINGTON - FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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Chandler, Newberry praise new program that helps homeless veterans

Congressman Ben Chandler announced today that Lexington will receive over \$187,800 to provide vouchers that will enable chronically homeless veterans to afford permanent housing.

Housing assistance will be available for 35 low income Lexington veterans and their families.

Mayor Jim Newberry praised Chandler for helping to secure the funds. "This is another step toward improving the availability of safe, affordable housing in our city," Newberry said. "It supports veterans who returned to Kentucky only to find that their lives had been turned upside down. I look forward to expanding this effort in the future."

The program will be coordinated by the Lexington VA Medical Center and the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Housing Authority. Veterans certified as eligible by the Department of Veterans Affairs will pay 30 percent of their adjusted gross income toward

rent and utilities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Choice Voucher program, administered by the Lexington Housing Authority, will make up the balance through vouchers. In addition, the Department of Veterans Affairs will assign a social worker to support the families. The social worker and the Housing Authority will assist in the location of suitable housing.

Austin Simms, executive director of the Housing Authority, said the new program will be a valuable weapon in the ongoing battle to provide sufficient affordable housing in Lexington. "By working together with many partners, we are making progress, but there is still a great need," Simms said.

With the support of BUILD, a local group involving a number of churches and focusing on issues related to housing and health care for low income citizens, Newberry is also working on another different approach -- establishment of an affordable housing trust fund. He recently appointed a 47-member commission to study the idea, examine how it works in other communities and recommend the best approach for Lexington. Several members of the commission, chaired by David Christiansen, director of the Central Kentucky Housing and Homeless Initiative, and Paula King, director of the city's Division of Community Development, attended today's news conference.

The new voucher program for veterans was approved by Congress late last year.